

REMARKS

The present amendment is submitted in response to the Office Action dated November 17, 2004, which set a three-month period for response, making this amendment due by February 17, 2005.

Claims 1-7 are pending in this application.

In the Office Action, the Applicant's election of Group I, drawn to claims 1-7, was acknowledged. The disclosure was objected to for an informality. Claims 1-7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Claim 1 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by JP Application No. 03-271635 to Katsuhiko. Claims 1-2 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,559,387 to Beurrier. Claim 3 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Beurrier. Claim 6 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over either Katsuhiko or Beurrier in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,241,235 to Culp.

The Applicant notes with appreciation the indicated allowance of claims 4, 5, and 7, if rewritten to overcome the rejections under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, and to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

In the present amendment, the specification has been amended to address the noted objections, to add standard sectional headings, and to delete reference to the claims.

To more clearly define the present invention over the cited references and to address the rejections under Section 112, second paragraph, claims 1-7 have been canceled and new claims 9-16 were added. These new claims adopt standard U.S. method claim format to address the rejection based on indefinite language.

New claim 9 combines former claim 1 and allowable 5. Therefore, claim 9 is allowable by inclusion of allowable claim 5. Claims 10-16 include the features of former claims 2, 3, 4, 6, and 7. Claim dependencies were changed, so that the claims all depend ultimately from allowable claim 9, and multiple claim dependencies were eliminated.

Therefore, claims 9-16 all stand in condition for allowance. Action to this end is courteously solicited.

Should the Examiner have any further comments or suggestions, the undersigned would very much welcome a telephone call in order to discuss these further issues.

Respectfully submitted,



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